

Foreign Service Construction Engineer – Vacancy Announcement

Announcement No: CON-07-02

Opening Date: June 18, 2007

Closing Date: July 09, 2007

Position Title: Foreign Service Construction Engineer

Area of Consideration: All sources.

Grade and Starting Salary Range: FP-4: \$49,511 - \$72,709

Additional Benefits

Tax-Free Housing overseas; Tax-Free Educational Allowance for eligible dependents, etc. (See "Benefits Package" brochure for more information.)

Number of Vacancies:

The Department of State is developing a rank-order hiring register of eligible candidates to fill a limited number of entry-level Foreign Service Construction Engineer (FSCE) vacancies. The number to be hired will depend on the needs of the Foreign Service.

Location:

Initial training will be in Washington, D.C. and may include overseas travel on temporary duty. After six-months to two-years, appointees will be assigned overseas to a construction project for a tour of two or more years, according to the needs of the Foreign Service.

All potential applicants are strongly urged to read this entire Vacancy Information to ensure that they meet all of the requirements for this position before applying.

Applicants must be American citizens and at least 20 years old to apply and at least 21 years of age to be appointed. By law all career candidates must be appointed to the Foreign Service prior to the month in which they reach age 60.

For more information, contact:

HR/REE

Ph [1] 202-261-8884.

<mailto:convacancyinfo@state.gov>

Description of duties:

An FSCE is an engineer, architect or construction manager in the Office of Overseas Buildings Operations, responsible for monitoring contractor work on Department of State construction projects overseas. The FSCE is a member of a U.S. Government team which ensures that construction work is professionally performed according to applicable plans, specifications, schedules and standards.

The following are typical duties, performed at various grade levels, in the course of a career as a Foreign Service Construction Engineer.

In Overseas Assignments:

1. Oversee contractor activities to ensure proper execution of construction work for new properties or improvements to existing properties used by the Department of State and other foreign affairs agencies of the U.S. Government overseas.
2. Inspect construction work for contract compliance.
3. Render technical interpretations of plans and specifications.
4. Review and approve contractor submittals.
5. Evaluate, negotiate, and approve change order proposals.
6. Evaluate and participate in settlement of contractor claims and disputes.
7. Prepare cost estimates for change orders and claim settlements.
8. Monitor ongoing and forecast final construction completion costs.
9. Approve and monitor contractor's construction schedule; identify and resolve sources of delay.
10. Approve and monitor contractor's safety and security programs.
11. Approve and monitor contractor's quality control/quality assurance program.
12. Verify and approve payments to contractors.
13. Coordinate architect/engineer services during construction.
14. Prepare comprehensive and timely reports on construction project activities.
15. Prepare and administer budgets for construction management activities.

In a Washington Assignment:

1. Coordinate technical, financial, logistic and administrative support for overseas construction projects.
2. Participate in the development of designs, plans, specifications and completion schedules for new construction and renovations of Department of State facilities overseas; and provide guidance through integrated design reviews with design-build contractors under contract to the Department.
4. Travel to project sites to evaluate local construction capabilities, observe progress of ongoing projects and evaluate the performance of those involved in the construction.
5. Develop special contract terms and conditions according to project requirements.
6. Participate in pre-qualifying bidders, evaluation of bids and contract award negotiations.
7. Develop site staffing plans and participate in selection and assignment of personnel.
8. Participate in development of policies and procedures relating to the Department's overseas construction program.

9. Coordinate procurement and shipment of government-furnished construction material and equipment.
10. Develop construction management budgets and participate in the allotment and management of funds.
11. Receive specialized training.

Initial career development assignments:

Upon entry into the Foreign Service and after completion of orientation and familiarization training, a Construction Engineer will normally be assigned to an initial tour in Washington, D.C. during which temporary overseas duty assignments of two to six weeks are common. After the initial tour, assignments will be for periods of two to four years overseas or in the U.S. and will be based on the Department needs, career development requirements and personal preferences.

Career track movement:

Promotions beyond FP-04 are based on annual performance evaluations in competition with other Construction Engineers at the same grade level. Available promotions are awarded to those who have best demonstrated the ability and potential to perform at a higher level of responsibility.

Assignment opportunities for Construction Engineers range from grade FP-04 entry-level positions up to Senior Foreign Service. Entry-level positions provide technical, logistic and administrative support to overseas construction projects while the Senior Foreign Service is responsible for overall senior level management of major construction projects overseas and programs in Washington.

Initial salary, salary increases and tenure:

Initial salaries for new employees are set within the FP-04 pay scale depending on education, specialized experience and salary history. Salaries are determined at the time the offer of employment is made.

Entry level salary for federal Civil Service candidates appointed without a break in service is set at the rate in the Foreign Service salary schedule nearest to the base salary rate of their previous GS salary, provided the work performed in the previous position is related to Construction Engineering activities.

In general, persons with satisfactory performance ratings receive a within-grade salary increase annually through step 10 and biennially through step 14 if they have not received an equivalent increase during that period.

Foreign Service Specialist Career Candidates are considered for tenure by a Tenuring Board after a minimum of two years experience in the Foreign Service

Education and specialized experience requirements

In addition to the general requirements for employment in the Foreign Service, all Construction Engineer candidates must have at least a Bachelor's degree at the time of appointment, as indicated below.

Grade Level	Annual Salary	Education Requirement	Specialized Experience
FP-04	\$49,511 to \$72,709	BS or BA Degree	5 years

Education requirement:

Applicants must hold a Bachelor of Science or Bachelor of Arts degree from a program accredited by the Accreditation Board for Engineering and Technology (ABET), National Architectural Accrediting Board (NAAB) or American Council for Construction Education (ACCE) within a college or university in one or more of the following disciplines:

- Architecture or Architectural Engineering
- Construction Engineering or Construction Management
- Civil/Structural Engineering
- Electrical Engineering
- Mechanical Engineering

Degrees received from non-U.S. colleges or universities will be considered acceptable based on any of the following evidences:

- The candidate submits an evaluation of completed course work from an accredited program in a college or university. The candidate must substantiate that foreign course work is equal to the curriculum recognized by the ABET, NAAB or ACCE.
- The degree holder was accepted for advanced study by an accredited program in a college or university recognized by the ABET, NAAB or ACCE.
- A state university in the U.S. accepts the institution as one whose transcript is given full value in subject areas applicable to the curriculum at the state university and is a recognized non-U.S. equivalent program by the ABET, NAAB or ACCE.
- The candidate presents evidence of registration as a professional engineer or architect by any state in the U.S.

Specialized experience requirements:

Specialized experience should show that applicants have an in-depth knowledge of their field and can be expected to perform engineering or architectural duties related to construction at Department of State projects worldwide.

Specialized experience obtained through assignments to field sites on vertical construction projects will be given the most favorable consideration. Vertical construction projects are not limited to but include multi-story buildings, large-scale residential communities and warehouses.

The applicant must substantiate that the required specialized experience was obtained on major vertical construction projects through assignments which required responsibility for coordination of architectural/engineering details, shop drawings, cost control and schedules at construction field sites.

Applicants should show that their academic achievements and/or job-related experience have been at progressively increasing levels of performance and responsibility. They must demonstrate experience and abilities in some or all of the following activities:

1. Managing and supervising construction projects.
2. Reviewing and checking construction drawings and specifications.
3. Inspection of construction work.
4. Managing financial elements of a construction project, such as budget and payments.
5. Applying test procedures and equipment used on construction projects.
6. Applying safety practices and procedures to construction projects.
7. Applying quality control and quality assurance practices and procedures to construction projects.
8. Development and application of construction scheduling techniques.
9. Administering construction contracts.
10. Utilizing computer software to management construction projects.
11. Demonstrate effective verbal and written communications skills with technical and non-technical personnel.
12. Display effective leadership and consensus building skills with colleagues, supervisors and subordinates.

Substitution of education for specialized experience

A master's degree in a construction-related discipline may be substituted for one year of specialized experience or a doctoral degree in a construction-related discipline may be substituted for two years experience toward satisfying the five year minimum requirement for specialized experience.

Evaluation of experience:

The total experience of the applicant must be of a progressively responsible nature and convincingly demonstrate the applicant's ability to do the following:

1. Professionally perform construction contract administration.
2. Understand and interpret architectural plans, engineering drawings and specifications. Recognize errors, ambiguities or omissions and provide corrective recommendations.
3. Understand acceptable construction techniques, procedures, standards and materials to ensure construction is performed in accordance with applicable plans and specifications.
4. Inspect construction work, review material submittals and shop drawings to ensure compliance with contract requirements.
5. Monitor project progress according to an approved schedule. Identify causes for delays, develop and take corrective action.
6. Monitor construction project costs. Review and certify contractor requests for progress payments. Forecast total construction costs.
7. Analyze pending contract change orders, potential or actual claims and negotiate acceptable cost and time settlements.
8. Prepare project reports and recommendations. This includes both narrative and numerical presentations of project status information. Prepare written descriptions of problems and recommendations for solution.

9. Understand and apply test, quality control and safety procedures.
10. Communicate effectively orally and in writing.
11. Apply computer software to construction project management and fiscal control.
12. Recognize impending problems, develop options for action and recommend solutions.

Qualifications which are desirable but not required in order to be considered for employment:

- Design experience on construction projects.
- Fluency in a foreign language.
- A professional license in the applicant's field of specialty or an Engineer in Training Certificate. Applicants who are unlicensed architects participating in an Intern Development Program should so state.)
- Advanced degree in the applicant's field of specialty.
- Experience with vertical construction projects outside the United States.
- Demonstrated working knowledge of related engineering fields other than applicant's field of specialty.

How you will be evaluated:

Candidates will be evaluated on their total background including experience, education, awards, training, and self-development as it relates to the position. Selection for this position will be made only from among candidates possessing the best qualifications.

How to Apply:

Applications must be submitted electronically through the "Gateway to State" system. To access this system please go to:

<http://careers.state.gov/specialist/opportunities/constructeng.html>.

Required Documents:

As part of the online application, applicants will be asked to submit the following required documents:

A. College Transcripts

Applicants will be prompted to print out a fax coversheet once they have successfully submitted their application. Instructions for submitting these forms are included in the online application. This document must be faxed before the closing date of this announcement, which is midnight eastern time.

Both official and unofficial transcripts are acceptable as part of the application process. If you are selected for an interview you will be asked to bring your official transcripts to your oral assessment.

B. Supplementary Questionnaire

Purpose: The Supplementary Questionnaire provides an opportunity to describe examples of your experience which relate to the skills listed below and best show your ability to handle various aspects of construction engineering. The information you give may be used to structure your oral examination/interview should you be invited, and is an important factor in the competitive evaluation of applicants.

Instructions: Limit responses to 200 words or less for each item. Describe how you used the following abilities and/or knowledge, indicating the source from which the work-related experience was acquired. Examples can be drawn from any part of your personal experience. Compose your replies carefully, as one of the skills necessary to succeed as a Foreign Service Construction Engineer is the ability to write clearly and concisely.

1. *Teamwork and Leadership:* Discuss your ability to work toward a common goal. Give examples of instances where you have lead a team in the accomplishment of a specific goal.
2. *Organization and Planning:* Give examples which demonstrate your organizational and planning skills in accomplishing complex tasks according to a firm schedule.
3. *Problem Solving:* Give examples demonstrating your ability to think logically and objectively, to analyze problems, and to apply sound judgment in assessing the practical implications of alternative solutions.
4. *Communication Skills:* Give examples displaying your ability to communicate effectively and persuasively both orally and in writing.
5. *Computer Skills:* Describe specific instances which show the extent to which you used computer software to manage construction-related projects.

6. Cite specific examples from your background and experience, summarize your professional knowledge, skills and abilities which would apply to a career as a Foreign Service Construction Engineer.

C. Autobiography

A maximum 1,000 word autobiography which discusses your:

- Personal background
- General comments on work experience
- Personal interests and hobbies
- Motivation for joining the Foreign Service as a Construction Engineer

In cases where education is substituted for experience, copies of college transcripts, diplomas, etc. must be presented at the time of oral assessment. At the same time bring a copy of your Professional Engineering Registration or Certificate of Engineer in Training, or Architect License, if applicable. These materials become the property of the Department of State and will not be returned.

Selected candidates: Please note all travel and other expenses incurred in connection with the oral assessment are the responsibility of the candidate.

Executive Branch agencies are barred by 5 US Code 3303 as amended from accepting or considering prohibited political recommendations and are required to return any prohibited political recommendations to sender. In addition, as mandated by 5 US Code 310, sons and daughters of federal employees cannot be granted preference in competing for these employment opportunities.

THE DEPARTMENT OF STATE IS COMMITTED TO EQUAL OPPORTUNITY AND FAIR AND EQUITABLE TREATMENT FOR ALL WITHOUT REGARD TO RACE, COLOR, NATIONAL ORIGIN, SEX, RELIGION, AGE, SEXUAL ORIENTATION, DISABLING CONDITION, POLITICAL AFFILIATION, MARITAL STATUS, OR PRIOR STATUTORY, CONSTITUTIONALLY PROTECTED ACTIVITY. THE DEPARTMENT PROVIDES REASONABLE ACCOMMODATIONS TO APPLICANTS WITH DISABILITIES. APPLICANTS REQUIRING A REASONABLE ACCOMMODATION FOR ANY PART OF THE APPLICATION OR HIRING PROCESS SHOULD SO ADVISE THE DEPARTMENT. ALL DECISIONS FOR GRANTING REASONABLE ACCOMMODATIONS ARE MADE ON A CASE-BY-CASE BASIS.